# new masses

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**The Marshall Plan:**

# WHY PRAGUE SAID NO

**A first-hand report by WALTER STORM**

☆

## THOMAS MANN AS CRITIC

*by S. FINKELSTEIN*

☆

*The Witnesses Against Eisler:*

## WASHINGTON RAT-RACE

*by VIRGINIA GARDNER*

☆


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# just a minute

NEW YORK has been a city of flameless fire these past two weeks. When anyone talked to us of the weather we raged —in a polite way, of course. Is it necessary to mention the mugginess when it lies on your neck like a wet, flabby hand? But there it was making work a drudgery. To escape, but not in the usual way of icing ourselves in a synthetically frozen movie-house, we marched up Broadway one evening. Like Jimmy Durante we can do without Broadway, but every now and then we get a hunger for it, particularly the stretch between Forty-second and Fiftieth Streets. This evening it dazzled with Mr. Edison's diamonds. Not one of the thousands of faces parading the stretch had a shadow on it. The lights gave everyone a mazda glow and each face seemed characterless.

The bobby-soxers were out in small contingents, although that night they wore no socks. Too hot for any more clothes than the law made necessary. They stood along the curb giggling to one another or eyeing the young, lone passing gents, especially those in uniform. These are lonely kids hunting for company, just as lonely for all the two's and three's in which they move. Broadway gives them a brief chance to run away from the drabness of their lives. All the talk of the bluenoses can't change their need to belong to something and to try to be part of a larger world.

We stopped to look into a men's shop-window with all its fantastically cut clothes. This one was apparently meant for the sporting crowd—the sharply pointed shoes, bathing trunks sprinkled with paramecia and protozoa and shot through with everything from the spectrum, shirts with monograms on the breast pocket. We were wondering if we ever would have guts enough to wear the things that make a Bugsy Siegel glamorous when two bobby-soxers also began to look. Said the blonde thin one to the blonde fat one: "Timmy's birthday's soon. How'd he look in those trunks?" "He'd look fine, but they don't go with Coney Island." I continued not to mind my own business and listened for more. "When would he get a chance to wear 'em anyway? He doesn't get out 'till next January. Maybe his old man'll send him to Florida, Miami, to wear 'em. Maybe the parole board'll send him for being such a good boy in the clink." But the blonde thin one kept looking and perhaps Timmy will have his trunks even if he has to wear them on a Coney Island beach.

It doesn't take long to hike those eight blocks from Forty-second to Fiftieth, even if you do stop to listen or to look at the displays of Hollywood's latest. This is our Park of Culture and Rest—overweighted with gaudiness, an advertiser's mecca, but still one of the magnetic centers of America. We tried to explain why to a friend from Poland who saw it recently for the first time. He was awed, he made it clear, but not out of respect. "One gets tired walking along that street and the test of a good street is whether it drives weariness away." We confess we had no answer except to assert our pride in our city. "But I am speaking of Broadway. Your city is a rare wonder."

We agreed.

NM's critic S. Finkelstein, whose thoughtful article on Thomas Mann appears in this issue, will delve into the question of "The Artist and His Audience" as one of the features of NM's three-day Labor Day weekend at The Allaben, Napanoch, N. Y., beginning Friday evening, August 29. Dr. B. A. Botkin and Pete Seeger will be on hand with the folklore and songs for which they are famous; in addition there'll be swimming, boating, dancing, entertainment. More details next week.

J. S.


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Prague Looks at the Plan Walter Storm . . . . 3
Fox-hole to Rat-hole Vivian Howard . . . . . 6
The Little Black Book: a short story Alan Max . 8
Portside Patter Bill Richards . . . . . 10
Paris Letter Claude Morgan . . . . . 11
Why Are You Silent? Joseph North . . . . . 13
Trial by Perjury Virginia Gardner . . . . . 14
Book Reviews: Essays of Three Decades, by Thomas Mann: S. Finkelstein; Horizon Is Calling, by Taro Yashima: Phil Bard . . . . . 17
Films William Simon, David Ellis . . . . . 21
Theater Isidor Schneider . . . . . 23



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# PRAGUE LOOKS AT THE PLAN

***From Munich to Marshall the Czechs have learned that their nation's welfare is imperiled by a "Western bloc." A report on their own rebuilding plan.***

**By WALTER STORM**

*Prague (by mail).*

HERE in Prague the decision not to queue up for dollar aid in Paris assumes a different color from that given it in the American press. Czechoslovakia, like many of its neighbors, is making a vigorous postwar recovery under a national economic plan, the results of which are already visible in steadily improving living conditions. There is none of that panicky on-the-edge-of-disaster feeling, and consequently not the same urge to be "saved" as in some countries farther West. As a result people take a steady view of the Marshall Plan: they see it not as a magnificent Carnegie grant to Europe but as a thinly-disguised bear-trap baited and set by the Wall Street millionaires.

One point should be made at once: the American press is lying when it says the decision to stay away from Paris was forced on other parties by the Communists. The decision was unanimous in the National Front Government, which is made up of several parties including those with an avowed "western" outlook. The Czech Socialists, the second largest party and the Communists' chief opponents, have in their newspapers been as emphatic as any other group in supporting the decision. Newspapers and rightist parties which constantly attack the Communists on most issues would certainly have made the charge of Communist steam-rolling if there were any truth in it. Furthermore, no newspaper has echoed the line so persistently plugged abroad—that Russia is taking reprisals against Britain and the United States by putting as many countries as possible behind the "Iron Curtain," thus selfishly depriving them of the chance to get some of those economic life-savers now being tossed around.

As events have developed in the last month, it is difficult to find arguments to convince a Czech why his country should have been represented at Paris. Public opinion is solidly behind the government. I don't say that no one opposes the decision. Probably the Slovak Democrats and Catholic People's Party do in their hearts, but they have not made a public stand on the issue because they would have to rely on pretty thin arguments. I met individuals who spoke against it, some who regretted that Czechoslovakia had not landed in the Western camp, some who said bitterly it was a betrayal to the Communists. But the important point is that no one in a responsible position took that stand, nor did any political group or newspaper.

Everyone agrees that genuine assistance by the United States could help war-shattered Europe to rise to its feet again; and that the giving of such aid would be an act of tremendous importance in restoring international amity and promoting peace. But no one believes that a government which has spoken and acted as the US has in recent months can suddenly become pure and a benefactor of mankind. One Czech editor wrote: "The Americans are mocking at the misery of Europe. Their pretense at sympathy when they are looking for hard cash bargains leaves a bad taste."

Broadly the grounds of opposition to the Marshall Plan, expressed here in newspapers, by political leaders and economists, and generally in private conversation, can be reduced to the following: (1) The plan is a device to build up Germany again, without consultation with the United Nations or with the Soviet Union; (2) It will help to bolster bankrupt reactionary regimes. Its aim is not to save Europe, but what is left of the sick capitalism of Europe; (3) Its intent is to shatter the planned economies of Eastern Europe; (4) It will result in a Western European bloc with an American-controlled Ruhr as its heart.

The vague formulation of the Marshall Plan led many, including the Czech government, to think there was some possibility of real economic assistance. That is why the Czechs first agreed to go to Paris. But events have moved fast, and like an iceberg coming out of a mist, the real intention of the Marshall Plan has become visible.

THE haste with which the covers have been thrown off, and Germany drawn into the scheme, has surprised many people here. No one thought it would be done as crudely as that. The proper conclusions have been drawn from the words of Italy's Count Sforza on the first day of the Paris talks, regretting that no German spokesman was present. And also from General Clay's statement that Germany will get an Anglo-American loan of $300,000,000, and the announcement that the steel production



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ceiling will be raised from 7,500,000 to 12,000,000 tons a year—contrary to the Potsdam agreement. The feeling is widespread not only that Germany is to get a share of the dollars, but that she is going to get preferential treatment and superior status to other nations. There is no need to stress how Europeans feel about this, how Poles and Yugoslavs, for instance, who fought bitter Partisan campaigns, and who are still living in lands wrecked and ravaged by the Germans, look upon this tender attitude toward Germany. "We are not against building up Germany," a leading Czech member of Parliament told me. "But not in the way they are doing it at Paris —without security against new aggression, without disarmament, denazification or the promotion of democratic institutions."

A view expressed in all the newspapers is that the Paris talks are an evasion of international obligations to the UN. "We still support the international organs set up to secure peace, even if some people would like to forget them," wrote *Pravo Lidu*, the Social Democratic daily. Everywhere it is being said that Washington is now trying to get the German settlement it could not pull off at the recent Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, when Soviet opposition secured an adjournment of the problem until November. With the generally good and sympathetic feeling in this country toward the Soviet Union, this causes a feeling of anger. People remark that if the USSR is to be made the victim of a dirty deal, Czechoslovakia may also get the same deal now or later.

It is becoming clear what Marshall and Bevin meant when they spoke about self-help among the European nations. The Ruhr, as the most highly industrialized region in Western Europe, will be the center of the economic unit the Marshall planners intend to set up. It will supply coal, steel and chemicals, the production of which is to be stepped up. The industrial output and the trade relations of other nations will be related to the Ruhr output. And who is to own the Ruhr? Why, the same people who are putting the money into the scheme — the American monopolists, with a minor share-holding by the British who have been allowed in on the ground floor in this business. So helping starving Europe turns out after all to be quite a business proposition.

People here cannot believe that an administration which produced a Truman Doctrine in March would, by July, want to help countries where a large sector of industry is nationalized. Only a truly happy optimist would think that a Republican-dominated Congress would grant credits to Yugoslavia, for example.

The technique of bolstering reaction by lending dollars is becoming familiar as a result of events in Great Britain, France and Italy. Czechoslovakia's largest newspaper, the Communist *Rude Pravo*, highlighted an article giving the experiences of one country which was rescued by dollars—Great Britain. It described all the processes of the deal: how the removal of price controls shrank the loan to almost half its value; how the main purpose of the loan—purchase of industrial equipment —was sabotaged by tories both in the United States and Great Britain. It described how nearly a third went to finance British military activities in the Middle East and India, adventures which would have been impossible without the loan. Now with the loan running low, Britain is in the same crisis as when she took it, with the added thrill of being gripped in a full-Nelson by Wall Street. The article draws the conclusion that the loan has acted to place not only British foreign policy under American control but even a large measure of home policy. Talk about domination!

Events in France and Italy have also taught some lessons. In Czechoslovakia, where the government is led by the Communist Party, there is a practical demonstration of a fact which not enough Americans grasp — that Communists play a role of the greatest importance, influence and value in postwar European reconstruction. In Italy and France we can see how the dollar spell works. It enables a reactionary government to become irresponsible toward its own people. By shielding them from the immediate economic consequences of their acts, the dollar allows de Gasperi and Ramadier to get tough with the Italian and French working classes, and to oust the Communists from the government. They don't have to rely for necessities on the working class, when they can sell their favors to a "rich sugar-daddy," as one Czech who has lived in America put it to me. "We consider hard work, planning and organization more important than finance and bankers' agreements," I was told by a Czech economist, a member of the Planning Commission. "That's why we have not been fascinated by the Paris Conference. Obtaining foreign credits is all right, but it must be combined with a planned work program."

Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia have all invested an enormous amount of work and capital in their National Economic Plans. Already in Czechoslovakia the Two-Year Plan is paying dividends. After only four months of its operation, prices were slashed in all consumers' goods, income taxes were reduced, pensions and family allowances increased. There is a feeling of well-being, a sense of prosperity, spread out among the entire people. And what is happening in Czechoslovakia is happening all over Eastern Europe. There is a steadily rising standard of living, and a new vitality and a new activity have been touched off in millions of people. These countries had been helping themselves long before Mr. Marshall came out with his motto of self-help among the European nations.

And helping each other, too. Over the last year a whole network of agreements has been made, insuring real mutual assistance. The Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland are drawn together in these comprehensive trade understandings. Take the Polish-Czech agreement as an example of the scope of these commercial treaties. It provides for four times the amount of trade ever known between these two countries. It provides for exchange of patents, techniques and technicians, something impossible in countries where "free enterprise" prevails. Engineers of the Skoda works have already gone to Warsaw to put up a new steel plant. A start will soon be made on the construction of a canal joining the Danube to the Oder, so as to complete a system of waterways from the Black Sea to the Baltic. Czech ships have free transit over Poland.

The Soviet-Czech treaty will be on an even larger scale. The Soviet Union will buy one-quarter of Czechoslovakia's exports for the next five years. In return it will supply large quantities of grain, animal feed and fertilizer. In fact the Soviet Union is well able to supply foodstuffs to dollar-starved countries. In this trade grouping in Eastern Europe there is real



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self-help, but it has come about without fanfare and publicity, and without the trappings of a crusade which marked the Paris proceedings. It should be clear too that none of these economic agreements forbids the participants from trading with any other country.

THE impression here is that the Marshall Plan is simply another attempt to set up the Western European bloc—that dream of Goebbels now being peddled by Winston Churchill and General de Gaulle. It is a truncated and deformed kind of Munich. The result is that reactionaries are everywhere showing a new boldness. Fascist gangs are roaming in Slovakia and Poland. The Nazis have become much more aggressive in Germany. The Cagoulards are again showing their hooded heads in France. Franco's audacity is hardly checked.

Yet you don't find a feeling of pessimism or defeatism here. The general attitude is that this has been tried many times before, on a bigger scale, and it has always failed. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are too big today to be isolated. Western Europe needs them at least as much as they need Western Europe. The economic relations of Europe have been built up over centuries, and it is not thought possible that this harebrained scheme to split Europe is really going to work out when it comes down to practical brass tacks.

Nor do people here believe that the public is going to swallow it so easily —certainly not the European public. How will the people of France, for instance, react to the present French cabinet when they learn that in order for it to get Marshall Plan benefits it must be a party to the rearmament of Germany? What happens when the first lot of dollar grants comes to an end, as it has nearly done in Britain? Are the loans renewed? Who pays for this merry picnic? The feeling is that in a year, two years, the countries with planned economies will be marching ahead, providing ever-increasing benefits for their people, while the Western countries will still be running around in circles with their dollar plans, their Western blocs, their Truman Doctrines, and a whole host of new formulae they will have added in the meantime.

And they won't be one step nearer to a solution of Europe's fundamental problems.

THE HAGUE, July 21 (AP).—The Netherlands government said today it was using its armed forces in Indonesia reluctantly to establish conditions "more favorable" to implementation of the agreement under which the Islands would gain independence.
Dutch
Pledge Indonesia's
Freedom
Gropper



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# FOX-HOLE to RAT-HOLE

***For the Negro veteran the housing situation in Harlem can be described in one word: inhuman.***

**By VIVIAN HOWARD**

At first glance this tenement in Harlem seems deserted. It has an abandoned, gutted-out look, as if it had been neglected for generations. Then you notice that the windows are patched with old newspapers and there is rubbish out in front.

If you are a Negro veteran, married, and looking desperately for a place to live, you might find a room in this house. The room would be about six by eight feet and would contain a single narrow bed for yourself and your wife. The window glass is broken, the ceiling almost stripped of plaster and the walls pierced by big, jagged holes. As you climb the rotting stairs, you have to step cautiously to avoid stumbling.

You share one rusty toilet and one antique bathtub with about thirty-five people. For cooking, you have the use of a "kitchenette." This is a dark recess in the hall which contains a two-burner gas range placed on a rickety table. There is no icebox. You buy just enough food for one meal and wait your turn to cook. Then you wash your dishes in the bathtub—when you are lucky enough to get near it.

In the winter, on very cold days, you stay in bed with the single electric light burning for warmth. In summer the room is a hotbox, with sleep a tossing torment. Rats come out, as big as puppies, to nibble at stray crumbs of food. You can hear them in the walls all night long.

There is no way to keep yourself or your clothes clean, no way to avoid disease. For the privilege of living in this foul hole, you pay $5.50 a week, or nearly $24 a month.

If you do not believe that such a place exists, the address of this tenement is 53 West 134th Street, east of Lenox Avenue. There are veterans and their families living in this house and its counterparts throughout the Negro sections of the city. They have no place else to go. For the average Negro veteran, the housing situation can be described in one word: inhuman. Nothing in recent experience, except the war itself, has brought such misery and demoralization to human beings.

It is true that housing is the number one problem for both Negro and white veterans alike. But for the Negro, it is doubly acute. Even before the war, the Harlems of the nation were overcrowded and the rentals exorbitant. During the past sixteen years no new dwellings were erected in central Harlem with the exception of the Harlem River Houses and two projects now under construction. Meanwhile the population steadily increased. A recent Urban League survey showed that New York City's Negro population increased sixty-seven percent from 1930 to 1945, with the number in Manhattan rising from 224,670 to 344,000. When the veterans began streaming home the bad housing situation became worse, then impossible.

At the office of the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America, 57 West 125th Street, urgent and frantic requests for housing aid pour in every day. Some veterans tell of five and six people living in one small room. There are many cases of sudden evictions, when a landlord has let his house deteriorate to the point where it is condemned. No warning is given; families are merely pushed out into the street and the house boarded up. Everywhere, from high political offices down to the individual landlord, there is a callous disregard for the needs of these men who fought for their country such a short time ago.

The Negro soldier, when he came home from the war, expected far-reaching changes in his status as an American citizen. Instead he found himself Jim-Crowed into the same intolerable slums. It has been necessary for him to fight for the elementary right to live like a human being.

There has always been a very simple reason for the existence of Negro ghettos. As long as Negroes can be segregated, real estate owners can make huge profits out of worthless houses. No one would live in these slums if he could possibly help it; the Negro people cannot help it. It is a well known fact that on the outskirts of Harlem landlords have throughout the years raised rents as soon as white tenants moved out and Negro tenants moved in. Furthermore, the owners have no expenses. It is not considered necessary to repair a house when it is occupied by colored people. Everything that comes in is pure gravy. And what gravy! Figure that three rooms in that hell hole on 134th Street rent for $72 per month. That's more than you'd pay for a good three-room apartment in another section of the city, with Frigidaire, elevator, stall shower and no rats. Figure this too: the 134th Street house is seventy-five years old and has an assessed valuation of only $3,500. Yet the landlord collects approximately $3,400 in rent *yearly!*

For a long time a conspiracy has existed between the banks, large insurance companies and mortgage companies to prevent the building of low-cost houses in Harlem. Banks do not supply money for mortgages above 110th Street. The real estate interests prefer to keep Harlem as it is, one of the worst slum sections of the city, overcrowded to bursting point, where nearly every family is doubled up with another family, and where desperate veterans shell out $5.50 a week to live under conditions that belong to the Middle Ages.

It is a national scandal that up to now, nearly two years after V-J Day, nothing has been done to solve the veterans' housing problems. But even from the very small and pitifully inadequate number of units that have been built, a certain pattern is already apparent. Negroes made up ten percent of the armed forces. Yet they have received less than one-half of one percent of the new housing. In Harlem not a new house, not a single unit of living quarters, has been made available to the homecoming vet.

Last fall, the UNAVA made a survey of ten blocks in Harlem, from 125th Street to 135th Street, and discovered 600 boarded-up units that could be reconverted for emergency



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housing. Further investigation uncovered additional abandoned houses, with a total of 1,500 units. This was brought to the attention of the city government, with demands that the city take over and rehabilitate the houses. Promises were made, but nothing was done about it—"no money available." Instead of new housing, more mounted policemen were sent into Harlem to combat "crime waves."

Slums breed disease, infant mortality and juvenile delinquency. In central Harlem, 179 people out of 100,000 die of tuberculosis each year; in New York City as a whole the rate is forty-seven out of 100,000. In central Harlem, five mothers out of every 1,000 die in childbirth; in New York city as a whole, two out of 1,000.

Among the other hazards of slum living is sudden death by fire. Recently Harlem hit the headlines when forty-five people burned to death in two tenement fires. Night after night you can hear the fire engines screaming through the streets. The ancient, rotting and overcrowded houses with their littered halls are death traps.

Negro ghettos are costly for the whole city. Slums are profitable to nobody but the few who own them.

Who is holding back housing construction?

In Albany, Governor Dewey hoards a treasury surplus, while claiming that $229,000,000 of state funds are now available for public housing. He does not explain that this money was allocated years ago during the Lehman administration for specific housing projects which had to be delayed on account of the war. These funds are not available for new housing plans. It is doubtful whether they will even cover the projects for which they were earmarked because of increased construction costs.

In Congress, the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill, which would provide federal aid for both public and private low-cost housing, has been gathering dust in committee for the second year.

THE Negro veteran in Harlem will tell you that the housing situation has long ago reached the crisis stage and that drastic steps must be taken immediately. He will not have to walk more than two blocks in any direction to show you a boarded-up house which can be fixed over for emergency living quarters for himself and his family. Some of these houses are already owned by the city or state; others are so badly in tax arrears that the city would be able to take them over. Still others are owned by banks and large real estate companies who buy and sell them several times yearly for private speculative purposes. A tenement in Harlem apparently does not even have to be occupied in order to prove valuable to its owners. Sometimes it serves its purpose by existing as a deductible income tax item.

Architects and housing authorities have figured out that these boarded-up units could be rehabilitated by the city for about $700 per room. If a three-room apartment then rents for $25 a month, the city would get back half of its money in three and a half years. Opening the boarded-up houses will not solve the housing problem on any permanent basis. But it will put a roof over a veteran's head until low-cost houses are built.

As part of a long range program, UNAVA, speaking for the Negro veterans, has called for the allotment of $400,000,000 from the state surplus funds, plus a public bond issue for another $400,000,000, this money to be used both for opening boarded-up houses and for permanent housing. UNAVA is also campaigning for the passage of the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill.

In New York some long-planned construction work has been completed, including the large Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. project, Stuyvesant Town (no Negroes), and the John Lovejoy Elliott Houses (two Negro families). The construction for Negro tenancy of two housing projects on the Harlem River is a drop in the bucket. It does not take the curse off those houses which are supposedly erected for slum clearance purposes but will not accept as tenants those who are forced to live in the worst and most tragic slums in the city.

There is more to the story than the building of houses, as far as the Negro veteran is concerned. After homes are built, he wants to be sure that he is allowed to live in them. That means the smashing once and for all of Jim Crow housing, the outlawing of restrictive covenants and the end of the evil ghetto system.

**1** New York Times, June 24

## TENEMENT CRASHES AS BOYS' WARNING SAVES OCCUPANTS

A four-story tenement house at 636 Second Avenue collapsed at 3:55 P.M. yesterday only a few minutes after the police had evacuated safely the occupants of that building and three others of the same height that adjoin it.

The rescuers barely had gotten

**2** New York Times, June 28

## MOSES IS IN BERLIN ON SECRET MISSION

BERLIN, June 27 — Robert Moses, New York's Construction Coordinator, arrived unannounced in Berlin today aboard Gen. Lucius D. Clay's plane on an undisclosed mission. After all other officials—and Mr. Moses himself—had refused to comment, General Clay issued a short statement that said:

"Mr. Robert Moses has come at my personal request to examine the military government organizational structure and operating pro-

**3** New York Herald-Trib. July 18

## *Moses Tours Berlin's Ruins to Plan Housing for Germans*

*Robert Moses, whose several public offices include that of New York City Construction Co-ordinator, looking over war-ravaged Berlin before preparing recommendations for a housing program for western Germany at the request of General Lucius D. Clay, American Military Governor.*



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# The Little Black Book

***How the Republic of Narrigua became involved in the affair of Mamie of Shoregrove. Life was not so simple even in the good old days.***

## *A Short Story by ALAN MAX*

**Illustrated by Herbert Kruckman.**

"MARK, dear, after the Sunday School conference is over, can't we stop off in Chicago and see my cousin Lottie?" Alice Allway asked her good-looking, greying husband across the breakfast table.

Mark, busy navigating spoonfuls of cantaloupe to his mouth while his blue eyes were fixed on the morning paper, grunted.

"Does that mean yes or no?" asked his wife. She sat stiffly in her chair as if presiding over a state dinner.

Her husband glanced up. "What d'you ask?" said the president of the Allway Steel Company.

Alice repeated the question with annoyance.

"Sure," Mark replied, as a bit of cantaloupe dangled perilously in mid-air and groped its way toward his mouth.

The Fourth Annual Interstate Sunday School Conference—this was a long time ago in the innocent year of 1912—was to be held the following week in Wisconsin. Mark, who was chairman of his own state Sunday School Association, had been invited to address the gathering on the subject of "Religion and Business."

"I'll write to Lottie today," said Alice, smoothing down an imaginary wrinkle in her carefully-ironed dress. "Mark! What's the matter? Don't you feel well?" For her husband's lean face had suddenly gone white. He put the paper down quickly and tried to give full attention to the cantaloupe.

"I feel fine," he said curtly. He got two bites down and then stole another glance at the paper.

The item that had caught Mark Allway's attention was a small one and concerned neither steel production nor Sunday School activities. It was datelined Shoregrove, a resort ten miles away, and told how one Mamie Greene had been arrested on charges of running a disorderly house. The final sentence of the dispatch, the one that had drained Allway's face of its color, read: "It is reported that police have found a little black book containing names and addresses of prominent clients."

Mark rose from the table—"I just remembered—have a special board of directors' meeting this morning—I'll have some breakfast sent up to my office," he said. Holding the newspaper tightly, he gave his wife a kiss that barely alighted and hurried out.

Mark drove his Stanley Steamer not to his own office but to the Farrel Copper Company. Larry Farrel, his friend and fishing companion, had not yet arrived. But his slim, pert-nosed secretary ushered Mark into the private office, with its large photograph of McKinley on the wall. When Larry lumbered into the office twenty minutes later, Mark was nervously pacing the room and was snuffing out his sixth cigarette.

"Larry, I'm in trouble—you've got to help me," said the president of Allway Steel, and showed Larry the Shoregrove dispatch. Larry read it and looked up, the smile gone from his moonish baby-face.

"You mean you're in that book?"

Mark shrugged. "It's not against the law to visit Mamie's place. But think of the publicity—think of Alice's feelings—think of the Sunday school conference next week. We've got to stop this thing."

"You don't have to tell me," Larry said. "I'll do anything to help. But what can we do?"

Mark reminded him that the district attorney of Shoregrove, Harold Weller, was a fraternity brother of Larry's. "Get him to drop the case against Mamie," he pleaded. "But be sure to leave my name out of it."

Larry promised to drive out to Shoregrove right away. "I can't forget how you lent me that $10,000 the time my back was to the wall," he said.

"Don't mention that—it was nothing at all," Mark said generously. "You're a real friend, Larry."

That afternoon Larry arrived at Mark's large-windowed office. On a table at one end of the room stood a glass-enclosed model of the ill-fated *Maine*. When Mark saw Larry's face, his spirits sank. "What luck?" he asked.

Larry shook his head. "None." He related how glad Harold Weller had been to see him. They had energetically exchanged the old fraternity hand-clasp and the district attorney had listened with interest as Larry explained that a friend of his, for reasons that need not be mentioned, would like to see the case against Mamie Greene quashed.

"He probably thought I was talking about myself," Larry went on with a smile. Mark looked grim. "Anyway, Weller said if this had happened six months ago he'd have been only too glad to do an old fraternity brother a favor. But elections are coming and he's out to get the nomination for governor. He said he just can't take any chances now—not unless Tad Bascom drops out of the race for the nomination," Larry concluded. He lit up a Havana and puffed away in contentment over the good, though unsuccessful, deed he had performed.

Mark stared at his friend. "Well?" he said.

"Well what?" asked Larry.

"When are you going to see Tad Bascom?"

Larry protested. He didn't know Bascom personally—how could he get him to withdraw from the race? Besides, he had to get back to his office—an important buyer was due in from the East.

"I thought you were my friend," said Mark in an injured voice. "And you know I did nothing wrong. Only a little human slip, but it may ruin me." Of course, he went on, if Larry wanted to desert him in his hour of need—

"I'll see Tad Bascom right now," said Larry hastily.



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Mark's face brightened. "You're a real friend," he said.

Mark waited that night for Larry in the poorly-illuminated and rarely-frequented library at the Riverview Club. He had gone through eleven issues of the *National Geographic Magazine* before Larry appeared.

"No go," said Larry, slumping into a big leather arm-chair. "Tad Bascom is set on the governorship. Only one thing would make him give up the race—a seat on the State Supreme Court. Governor Danberry would appoint him in a minute, Bascom says, but there isn't a vacancy in sight. I do feel sorry for you, Mark," he sighed. "Gosh but I'm dog-tired."

"I'm sure you are," said Mark coldly. "But if our positions were reversed, do you think being tired would stop *me*?"

Larry looked startled. "But Mark, what can I do? There just isn't a vacancy on that court."

"Get one of the judges to resign," said Mark. "Visit them and talk to them—there are only seven judges to see. I'm an innocent man. You only have to convince one to resign."

"Well, maybe tomorrow—" said Larry reluctantly.

"Tomorrow?" said Mark. "That time you came to me when your back was to the wall and asked for $10,000, *I* didn't say 'tomorrow.'"

Larry wearily hoisted himself out of his chair. "All right, Mark."

Mark held out his hand. "A real friend," he said.

The next morning, right after breakfast, Mark was at Larry's house. Mrs. Farrel, picking tulips in the garden, said Larry was still asleep; he hadn't come in until four in the morning.

Mark bounced into the house and upstairs to the rosebud-wallpapered bedroom where Larry lay snoring heavily in one of the twin beds.

Mark shook him with a rough hand and Larry opened his eyes and yawned cavernously.

"Wake up," said Mark. "Tell me what happened."

"Nothing," mumbled Larry. "I saw the seven judges last night—got three of them out of bed—not the same bed, of course. They all want to stick to the bench."

"Didn't any of them hold out the slightest hope?" Mark pressed him.

"Not one," replied Larry. "They wouldn't even discuss the matter with me—except for Judge Ralph Brainard who said something about how if I had any influence in Washington—which I haven't—I might try to get his brother, Congressman Joe Brainard, cleared in that Army contracts investigation—which I wouldn't, of course."

Mark pulled the bedclothes from the bulky form of his friend. "What are you doing here when you should be in Washington?" he shouted.

"In Washington? Me?" cried Larry, trying to pull the bedclothes back over himself.

"You should be on your way already," snapped Mark. "You only have to get that Congressman cleared. It should be easy."

"But that's dynamite," protested Larry. "It's an Army contract scandal. We can't afford to get involved in things like that."

"Who's involved in contract scandals," retorted Mark angrily. "I'm an innocent man." Then he looked Larry straight in the eye and said, "Or do you think I've done something illegal?"

"Oh, no," Larry said apologetically.

"Am I asking anything but justice for myself?" Mark went on. "Of course, if you're going to lie there in bed snoring peacefully—*I* didn't close *my* eyes all night—while your best friend is being crucified—"

Larry sat up in bed. "All right, Mark," he said, looking as if he was about to cry. "Just let me get a few hours' sleep and I'll go to Washington."

"Sleep! Sleep! You can sleep when you get to Washington. It's only an eight-hour trip. Or rather, you can sleep after you've settled this investigation business. On second thought, you ought to take the train back the minute it's settled so as not to keep me on tenterhooks—it isn't something to be discussed over the phone. And then you can sleep all you want to." He pulled out his heavy gold watch.

"There's a train leaving in half an hour."

THREE days later Larry, haggard and with rings under his lead-colored eyes, walked into Mark's office and collapsed in a chair. He had seen Congressman Joe Brainard, he related, and also Congressman Dacey Stewart. Stewart was investigating alleged "gifts" received by Brainard from a shoe manufacturer whom he had helped get an Army contract and whose shoes had proved to have soles of high-grade cardboard. Stewart, a vigorous crusader against corruption, was deeply insulted at the suggestion that he drop the inquiry. There was only one thing might change his mind, the Congressman had hinted:



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if someone with influence with the Providence Oil Company could get his brother Henry a job as first vice-president with that company. Whereupon Larry had left Washington and made a stop-over in New York to interview Brother Henry Stewart and get the lay of the land.

"I figured I might as well see Henry on the way back and save myself a special trip to New York which I certainly would have been in for considering how little a trip to New York means compared to a $10,000 loan," said Larry with a touch of bitterness.

The sarcasm was lost on Mark. "Go on!" he said impatiently.

It seemed that Henry Stewart, who equaled his brother in ambition but not in keenness, had been trying for months to get into Providence Oil. But the company had made it clear that his only chance lay in demonstrating his influence by obtaining a grip on the oil concessions in the South American Republic of Narrigua.

"Unfortunately," Larry explained, "the concessions are in the hands of Empire Oil, the British rival of Providence Oil. Brother Henry is quite down-hearted. So we have reached the end of the road, Mark. We can't do any more."

Mark jumped up and clapped his hands. "Can't do any more, you say? Why, you've already won the day. All you have to do now is throw out the government of Narrigua and set up a government friendly to Providence Oil."

Larry's nostrils dilated with indignation. With a great effort, he rose to his feet and pointed a flabby finger at Mark. "Mark Allway," he said, "to help you I went to Shoregrove and saw the district attorney; I visited Tad Bascom; I interviewed seven judges in the middle of the night; I traveled to Washington; I made a visit to New York; all these things I did out of friendship for you—but, by God, you can't force me to invade the Republic of Narrigua—not tired like I am!"

"Who's asking *you* to invade Narrigua?" Mark replied scornfully. Picking up a copy of the *Evening Calendar*—one of the Carson chain of papers—he pointed to the front page. "Carson has been demanding the Marines land in the banana republic of Sanacosta, right next door to Narrigua. Now, your own wife's brother is Bert Carson's general manager. I'm sure he could persuade Carson to postpone this Sanacosta business for a few weeks and concentrate on Narrigua. You can get a train to Toledo in twenty minutes."

Larry went directly in a cab to the railroad station and caught the Toledo train by a matter of seconds. In Toledo he visited his brother-in-law Samuel; Samuel spoke to the wealthy, dyspeptic Bert Carson; Carson sent a wire to his Narrigua bureau; the next day the American consul in Narrigua, a young Harvard graduate who longed to be at the Court of St. James, was ambushed and wounded in the arm. "U.S. OFFICIAL WOUNDED IN NARRIGUA," shrieked the Carson press throughout the country; "LAWLESSNESS REIGNS—WHY DOESN'T OUR GOVERNMENT ACT?" Two days later a trim US Navy boat plopped a shell into Narrigua, causing several casualties whose exact number was a matter of dispute in the Navy Department for many years; the government of Narrigua collapsed; a distinguished junta of men of whom nobody had ever heard took over the government and, after a two-minute cabinet discussion, transferred the oil concessions to Providence Oil. Henry Stewart got the job of first vice-president with Providence; Congressman Dacey Stewart dropped his investigation of Congressman Joe Brainard; Judge Ralph Brainard obligingly resigned from the bench; Governor Danberry appointed Tad Bascom to the vacancy, leaving the nomination for governor in the bag for Harold Weller, Shoregrove's district attorney, who promptly issued an order that opened the big iron prison gates for Mamie Greene. In the Allway residence Mark, gaily whistling a tune from *The Merry Widow*, packed his bags for Wisconsin, the Interstate Sunday School Conference and a visit with Cousin Lottie; and Larry Farrel went to bed to sleep for three days.

OUT in Shoregrove, Mamie, plump and heavily mascaraed, threw her arms around her scrawny lawyer, Fred Ferguson. "How did you ever do it, ducky?" she cried.

"Just brain-work," ducky replied. "I planted a story in the papers about the police finding a little black book—I figured some sucker was bound to bite."

# portside patter

**By BILL RICHARDS**

Population experts say that the intelligence of the American people is declining. If this were true it would mark the first time that Congress has shown any leadership.

●

*Senora Peron has called off her proposed visit to England. In the midst of all their trials and tribulations the English will not fail to appreciate this cheerful note.*

●

President Truman says he spent the ten best years of his life in the Senate. If his two years in the White House are any criterion Truman emerges as the master of understatement.

●

*Dewey has offered to give Montana 50,000 New York Communists. Some people there say that if Dewey becomes President Montana will have 50,000 of her own.*

●

A GOP rally in Columbus, Ohio, is expected to launch a Taft boom. This will provide a splendid opportunity to observe the Boom and Bust cycle at high speed.

●

*Governor Wright of Mississippi complains that he heard seven different languages while riding in a New York elevator. That's nothing, Governor—the word "bigot" is known in more than fifty languages.*

●

The National Pretzel Bakers' Institute announces that alphabet pretzels are now available in seventeen letters. This should dispel any remaining doubts about the production genius of free enterprise.

●

*Holland wants the East Indies to adopt a conciliatory attitude. Evidently the Dutch can't get their Java sweet enough.*

●

French housewives have been admonished by officials for rioting while waiting in line to buy food. They are advised to take a queue from the British.



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# PARIS LETTER

## by Claude Morgan

*Paris (by mail).*

Discussions here among intellectuals of varying tendencies now have been temporarily relegated to the background. The big problem today is that which Anatole France raised when he had his character, Jerome Coignard, say: "In this state the world will move along. One must eat. That is the big necessity giving birth to all the others." Miners and railway workers, public utility workers, bank employes and clerks in the large department stores, metalworkers and civil servants complain bitterly that they have nothing to put in their mouths. Nothing at least at prices that are in line with their wages.

For the Blum experiment has failed. The Socialist-headed cabinet had promised that it would lower the cost of living. This has not been done. Why not? Because it is not enough to sign a decree to bring about a reduction in prices; and the Blum government, and later the Ramadier government, have not been willing to fight. To fight would have meant prosecuting the speculators, bringing to book the notorious "market middlemen" whose goods are sold in terms of gold prices; it would have meant favoring buyers' cooperatives, working with the shop committees to lower production costs and with consumers' cooperatives to check runaway prices. It would have meant governing with the aid of the people. But the Socialist government could not do so. It is no longer free now that it has joined with the reactionary parties to get the Communists out of the cabinet.

Ramadier has tried to explain the strikes and social unrest as the result of secret orders from some mysterious underground source. But everyone sees how ridiculous such an insinuation is: for were not the Catholic trade unions as eager to strike as the CGT? So we wind up with the following paradox: the Communists were removed from office because they demanded production bonuses for the workers, and the Ramadier cabinet, having tossed out the Communist ministers, has nevertheless had to grant the workers' demands. But not without hesitation. It fought them, and by its stubbornness paralyzed the revival of the country.

Prisoner as it is of the reactionary forces, the Ramadier cabinet has not been able to adopt a program of democratic reforms by which to balance its budget. Once again, those in the low-income brackets will have to pay through the nose. And the government will continue to spend billions of francs to wage war in Indo-China instead of negotiating with the Viet-Nam Republic. The discontent is so great that this cabinet, which was supposed to govern the country easily and soundly once it got rid of the Communists, is at present very unstable and in a complete muddle.

Reactionary writers and journalists are exploiting the situation by attempting to provoke a new rightward shift. Francois Mauriac and Raymond Aron in *Figaro* are actively waging their anti-Communist and anti-trade union campaign. The MRP (Popular Republican Movement) has drawn up a bill regulating the activities of the trade unions. De Gaulle, feeling that his hour draws near, is getting busier and busier. But the French Communist Party at its recent meeting at Strasbourg asserted its determination to prevent any shift to the Right, and to restore to France a government responsive to the will of the voters at the polls.

At the same time we see a renewal of efforts in the intellectual world to play down activities by left-wing writers. Dealing with the problem of the intellectuals at the Communist Party congress, Laurent Casanova rightly denounced this maneuver, which consists of uttering loud cries when a writer of the Left dares to express a political opinion (that is just propaganda!), whereas no one considers it out of order for a Mauriac, a Bernanos, a Jules Romains, or even a Duhamel, to express the most violently reactionary opinions in the newspapers for which they write (*they* merely exercise their right of freedom of expression!).

But there are some writers whose case is not so clear. They pose an important problem. In a vigorous interview appearing in *Les Lettres Francaises,* that fine Italian novelist, Elio Vittorini, who was a Partisan in Milan and is a member of the Italian Communist Party, has stated that he does not consider men like Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre overtly reactionary writers. "In them," he asserts, "there is a revolutionary potential as there is in all Utopians, as well as a reactionary potential. Their books are in advance of the state of their thinking. As in the case of Balzac and Dostoyevsky, they are reactionary and dangerous in their ideology which they express in a progressive fashion in their works."

It was after learning Vittorini's point of view that I read Camus' latest novel, *La Peste* (The Plague), which is now the talk of the intellectual world in Paris. And it seems to me that my friend Vittorini is completely wrong on this point. As a matter of fact, *The Plague,* like the other books of Camus, is by no means a progressive book (in relation, of course, to our times). Quite the contrary! In it Camus rehashes the old theory of Tolstoy and Gandhi concerning non-resistance to evil. Or at least, to combat it, he indicates the most classic methods of idealism: inner transformation, holiness. That's like bandaging a wooden leg!

When there is a plague (in Camus' novels he deals with a symbolic epidemic in the North African city of Oran, but today we are facing a far more dangerous plague), resignation and moral grandeur only help one to die better. *But progressive-minded men and women want to live.*

I could cite other examples which show, contrary to what Vittorini thinks, that men like Sartre and Camus do not have fundamentally reactionary ideas, but that their works, reflecting the contradictions, fears and despair of a bourgeoisie at bay, serve the aims of the reactionaries. Of course, there is no certainty that they will not change. We must never despair of human beings. But today, whether they like it or not, they are in the enemy camp.

A series of new books by authors deported during the occupation has given rise to violent debate. Particularly *Au temps de notre mort* (In the Time of Our Death), a highly intellectualized book by David Rousset, and *Ceux qui vivent* (Those Who Live), a more direct and more human work by Jean Laffitte. Notice the contrasting titles. Jean Laffitte, who is a Communist, speaks of life—while David Rousset's title is based on death. And this antithesis is to be found throughout the two volumes.

We are told that the American reading public is fed up with books of this kind. If that is true, readers in your country are wrong, because only now the most valuable ones are beginning to be published.

(*Translated by John Rossi.*)



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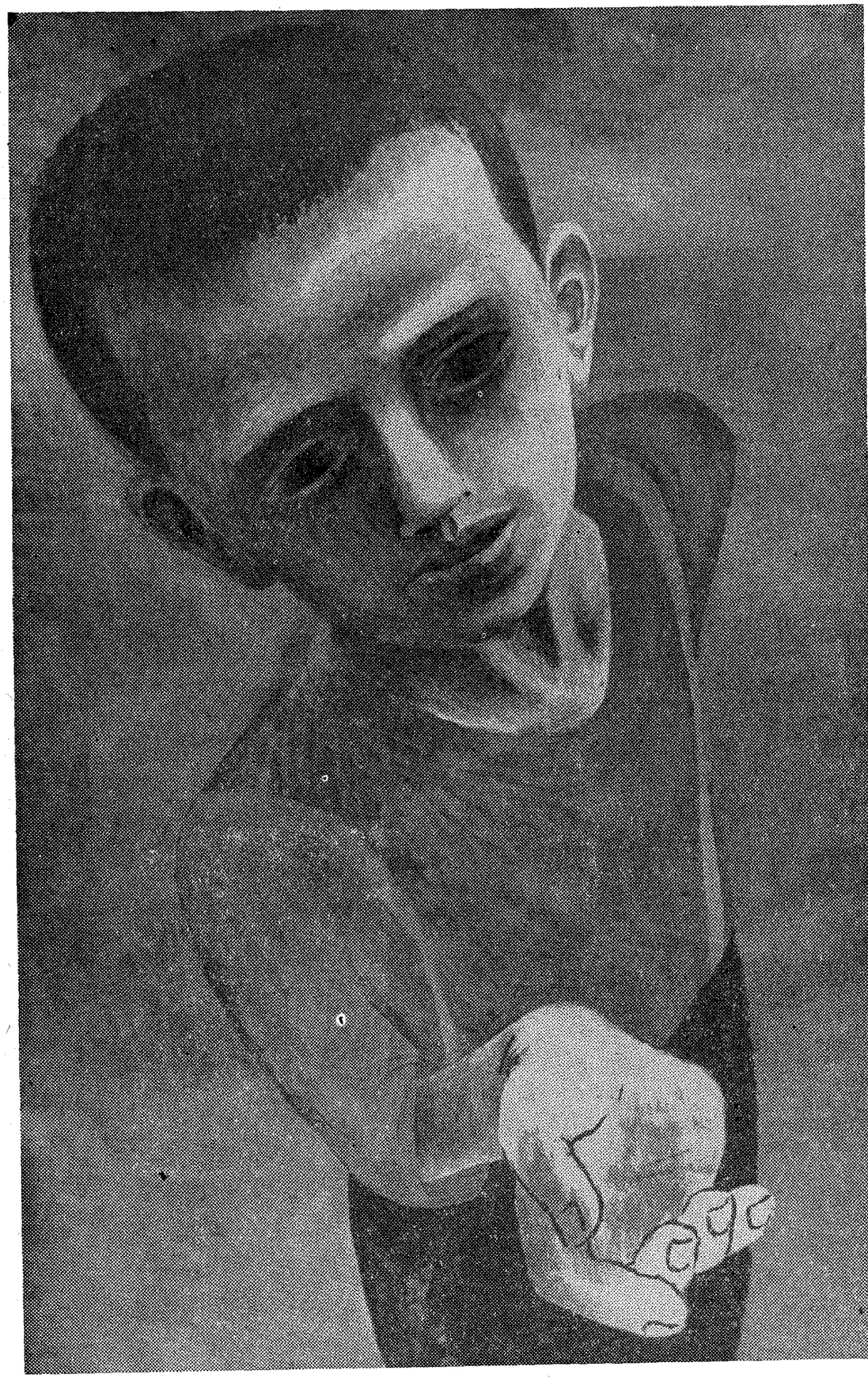

"Hunger," oil by Ben Shahn. This was one of the paintings purchased by the State Department for an exhibition tour of South America. This tour, together with a companion American exhibit in Europe, was cancelled in compliance with demands of tory Congressmen and the Hearst press. Last week a delegation from the Arts Division of Progressive Citizens of America went to Washington to protest this attack upon culture.



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# WHY ARE YOU SILENT?

## By JOSEPH NORTH

THE judge spoke, the newspapers carried modest accounts of his sentence, and a murderer in epaulettes gloated. The inquisitors of Madrid who torture Republicans to death in their crowded dungeons put down the lash and rod for a moment to celebrate on *vino* and drink toasts to John Rankin. The group of men and women in the United States who spearheaded the efforts to repay, in some small measure, the infinite debt we owe the Spanish Republicans were shamefully pilloried in our federal courts.

America should be ashamed.

Is it?

I await a roar of dissent and I hear, as yet, only a murmur.

I could not, at this moment, look into the haggard eyes of the democrats who faced the Messerschmitts and Capronis in Spain. I could not explain it to the children I saw who played in the streets when the strafers swooped down out of the clouds over the Puerto del Sol and left the bloody trail of youthful dead on the sunny pavements.

How could one render account to those who survived the fronts, those I saw who mastered the ABC's in the Loyalists' campaign to eradicate *analfabetismo*—illiteracy—so that they could better understand the world of today? Could they understand this? How could I explain it to that Aragonese peasant who learned to write his name in the front-line trenches and told me proudly: "Now I am a man"? I saw him and others like him lay down their primers and go over the top almost bare-handed to brave the machineguns made in Hamburg, in Milan. I remember the glorious bookstalls with the gaily-covered books of all the world's masters—Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Dickens, Cervantes, Jack London, Dreiser. I can never forget the thrill of encountering the book *Judios Sin Dinero*—Jews Without Money—by Mike Gold. These were the temples of Republican Spain. How could I tell it to the thousands I met who jammed these bookstalls on their brief leaves from the front?

I know that some reflection of this Spanish renaissance got across the Atlantic: a generation of progressive Americans drew their inspiration from the travail of Republican Spain. I have always felt that our people owe a profound debt of gratitude to those—like Dr. Edward Barsky, Howard Fast, Prof. Lyman Bradley—who would not let the memory of this epic die. They aided the ragged Republican refugees, kept alive the hopes of Guadalajara, Belchite, University City, the Ebro crossing: the dream that a democratic Spain can emerge from Franco's charnel house.

Many of you reading this will, I am certain, recall that Loyalist Spain first awakened you to the stern reality of our age, stirred you into joining the progressive march of contemporary mankind.

I await the thunder of your indignation: that Fast, who has sung a veritable hymn to democracy in his gifted books, should go to jail: that Barsky should go to jail. I can never forget the gaunt face of this man those grim days when the Loyalist's coastline was being cut by the fascists and he was charged with bringing the wounded of the International Brigade from Valencia to Barcelona. I remember his superhuman feat, the roar of triumph when the train loaded with wounded volunteers passed under the hail of machineguns, the rain of bombs from the Condors overhead—got through minutes before the enemy had cleaved the peninsula in two. That was Barsky.

If he, and his associates, go to jail, America's conscience goes with them.

I think of the writers who lived through the agony in democratic Spain, and who vowed, I recall, that they would never forget. They said so in many eloquent books and in numberless dispatches. Why are they silent?

I wait to hear the voice of Ernest Hemingway.

I wait to hear the voice of Herbert Matthews, of Leland Stowe and the others whose gifts then were devoted to victory for the descendants of Cervantes and Daumier.

I ask them: "Why are you silent?"

As SPAIN's battle was ours, so this shameful decision is judgment upon every one of us who love Republican Spain. If we are silent the millions who cherish freedom within the vast concentration camp that is Franco's land can come to only one conclusion: that Rankin speaks for us. That we yield to Franco. I know NEW MASSES readers, of all Americans, would be first to reject that.

I believe the decision can be reversed. I know we can strike a deadly blow at Franco by reversing that decision. We can give heart to the Spanish millions starving for bread but whose greatest hunger is for freedom.

But we cannot help by silence. They have had their fill of that for ten years. A decade passed and they heard little from us, but every day they hear the drummers beat the fatal tattoo as Republicans go to the wall.

And this I know: if Barsky, Fast, Bradley and the others go to jail, we are that much nearer an American facsimile of Spain today. What we do in this case reveals America's attitude toward the saboteurs of democracy. The Un-Americans are at the bottom of this; every knave who wants our nation delivered over to the enemy is exultant. They are laughing, gloating, today. Is theirs the last laugh? I don't think so.

For I know this too: if our voices rise in a common roar of protest, we can topple the wall Rankin is building about America.

They are listening in Cuatro Caminos, in Badalona, in Fuentes del Ebro.

*We urge our readers to contact the Citizens to Safeguard the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, 192 Lexington Ave., New York 16, N. Y. Funds are needed for the appeals; large sums will be necessary.*



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# TRIAL BY PERJURY

*Washington.*

**The Loyal Sons of Ananias & Finks Inc. are called to order at the Eisler trial.**

**By VIRGINIA GARDNER**

BY THE time the government had concluded its case against Gerhart Eisler, the whole shabby fabric of the frameup against him was apparent. A procession of employers' spies, rats, stoolpigeons and psychopaths had been paraded before the jury, reminiscent of the witnesses in the two Harry Bridges deportation hearings. Probably not since then had such a crew been shepherded into a witness chair by a persevering government out to "get" an individual. In that case an important labor leader had incurred the wrath of the shipowners and other big employers.

But here in the Eisler case the mystery was: Why Eisler? Here was no labor leader. Here was a short, stockily built, balding man of fifty, who came out of a Nazi concentration camp in France to this country with fifteen others on his way to Mexico — this much the jury knew from testimony of a government witness elicited in cross-examination. And as the trial unfolded, and Defense Counsel A. J. Isserman on cross-examination exposed one after another of the government witnesses, the great case of the US *versus* Gerhart Eisler fizzled down to little more than this—that he was a German Communist and that when he filled out a form for a visa to leave the country he did not mention that he was an American Communist—which he wasn't.

To prove his "affiliation" with the American party the government rounded up its hoary retinue of ex-Communists and labor fakers to testify that Eisler was a representative of the Communist International back when there was a Communist International, or, as Prosecutor Hitz snappily and frequently alluded to it in his opening statement, a "Comintern rep." It was not Mr. Hitz' fault that District Court Justice James W. Morris, in an effort to have a record which would stand up in a higher court, ruled out for the time being the testimony of Eisler's psychopathic sister, Ruth Fischer, a Trotzkyite, that Eisler told her in Paris in the summer of 1933 that he was going as a Comintern representative to America to change the "chaotic and stupid" policy of the American party. It was not Mr. Hitz' fault that one of the same witnesses used against Bridges, Sam Diner, of San Rafael, Cal., was prevented from testifying that Eisler played a role in the waterfront strike of 1934—an item not mentioned in the bill of particulars. Diner was removed as business representative of the International Ladies Garment Workers over the little matter of a fifty-dollar bribe offered by an employer. He was also expelled from the Communist Party.

Neither was it Mr. Hitz' fault that his prize witness, Louis Budenz, was so glib that he freely told on cross-examination that six months after he left the *Daily Worker* and the Communist Party he was conferring with the FBI, and that he had conferred with the FBI on some sixteen occasions. Actually it was a speech by Budenz in Detroit which rang the bell for the onset of the Eisler witch-hunt. In this speech he told of a mysterious "boss of all Reds." A few days later Frederick Woltman broke a story in the New York *World-Telegram* that this mythical boss of all American Reds was Gerhart Eisler. This really launched the Eisler case in full swing, timed neatly to coincide with his expected departure for home, which Washington had approved—and with the introduction in Congress of legislation to outlaw the Communist Party, to ban Communists from offices in unions, to subject to prison or fines persons in schools who sympathized with "Communist philosophy," etc.

LOUIS BUDENZ was not the only government witness whose shabby dealings with the FBI were exposed by Defense Attorney Isserman. But it was another witness who gave what was supposed to be the most convincing testimony — testimony which was knocked completely to bits, however, by a sensational disclosure by the defense.

He was Manning Johnson, thirty-eight-year-old Washington-born Negro, now of Oakland, Calif., where he is an electric trainman for the Navy. He told the jury of five white and seven Negro members how he was introduced to the defendant as "Brown" by Earl Browder. That was in 1933. Johnson said that he met him again as "Edwards" later in the summer of that year in New York, and knew him as Edwards until he left the Party in 1939. Under cross-examination Isserman made certain that the witness said he was positive it was in 1933 that he met Eisler. Asst. US Attny. William Hitz had asked Johnson in great detail about this meeting. At that time, in 1933, Johnson said, he was a district organizer of the Communist Party in Buffalo. He had received a letter in code, he said.

The reporters wrote furiously. "The message said," Johnson testified, his manner modest, with the professional touch of a police informer (which he later admitted he had been): " 'an important person by the name of Brown will meet with leading comrades. Announce meeting. Notify center.' " Johnson said he arranged the meeting at his home. He said it was there that Earl Browder, then national secretary of the Communist Party, "Brown," whom he identified as Eisler, and two leaders of the Canadian party, Tim Buck and Sam Carr, had conferred. He even managed to get in testimony, over defense objections, that the Canadian leaders "congratulated me on the successful way in which I had handled the smuggling of important documents across the Canadian border through the cooperation of a customs inspector." Isserman informed the court that the failure to strike this bit of testimony would form part of his basis for asking for a mistrial.

The only trouble with all of the "damaging" testimony that Johnson gave was this: *It happened that in 1933, when the meeting with "Brown" and the Canadian Communists and Browder took place before his very eyes, both Tim Buck and Sam Carr were serving jail sentences. In fact, they were locked in a Canadian prison from January 1932 almost to the close of 1934.*

The defense brought to the attention of the court, in asking for a delay to obtain depositions from Canada, a telegram from Tim Buck, who denied ever attending such a meeting as John-



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son described, and added: "I could not have been in Buffalo in 1933 because at that time I was in Kingston Penitentiary and was only released Nov. 24, 1934. The testimony of Manning Johnson is a complete fabrication from beginning to end . . ."

Among the minor witnesses against Eisler exposed by the defense attorneys, who in addition to Isserman include Carol King and David Rein, were two renegade Communists—William Nowell, former Communist organizer in Detroit, and Charles White, a Brooklyn trolley motorman. White admitted he had been supplying information to the FBI since 1937. Nowell admitted that he had appeared three times on speaking platforms with the anti-Semite Gerald L. K. Smith, and admitted reluctantly that he testified, as a former officer in Ford Local 600 of the UAW-CIO, in an injunction suit brought by the Ford company against the union. Asked by Isserman if his testimony hadn't resulted in an injunction against the union, he said piously: "My testimony dealt purely with communism in that case." He denied he had been in the employ of Harry Bennett, who was for years Ford's chief union-buster. Hitz complained in arguments at the bench that the defense was bringing in "inflammatory racial questions." Pressed to say how he meant that, he said, "I think there was an implication or words to the effect that Gerald L. K. Smith was opposed to the interests of the colored people."

JOSEPH ZACK KORNFEDER, known as Joseph Zack before he was expelled from the Communist Party, began his testimony for the government by smiling coyly at the jury. Mr. Kornfeder, who confided to a reporter that he bore a "superficial resemblance" to Lenin, who also was "a most amiable man," amazingly enough continued to smile when Mr. Isserman finished with him.

But Mr. Hitz did not. Mr. Hitz recalled Mr. Kornfeder to try to repair the damage, but Mr. Isserman seized the opportunity to wring further confessions from the witness. The address he gave as his residence was not his residence, but the office of a friend. The company he said he worked for as a salesman, the V-Seal Corp. of Detroit, maker of storm sash windows, had never paid him a commission in the two months he was employed, because he never had made a sale. It was owned, he claimed, by Homer Martin, sell-out artist and former leader in the UAW who attempted to deliver the union to Ford.

On direct examination, Kornfeder testified glibly, picturing Eisler as all-powerful among American Communists in 1933 and 1934. He himself was expelled a month after Eisler had supposedly met him in a "confidential meeting" in a New York park and told him if he did not offer to make a public retraction for criticism of the party's labor policy, there would be serious consequences. He also testified that Eisler hand-picked a slate of Ohio delegates to a party convention in 1934.

Now it happens that included in the government's bill of particulars, or particular charges, were the incidents of the meeting in the New York park, a meeting in Cleveland in the summer of 1933 when Kornfeder claimed to have met Eisler as "Edwards," and conversations with Eisler in Cleveland in 1934 at a party convention. Isserman asked the witness when it was that he first told a government representative of the incident to which he testified. The first time, said Kornfeder, was when he talked to Hitz prior to his going on the stand. Was he sure? Yes, he was certain. He had talked to a newspaperman, a friend of his on the *World-Telegram*. Was it Frederick Woltmann? "No, another one," he said. He didn't think he'd mentioned the park incident. "No, I only told this reporter I knew Mr. Eisler," he said.

"I ask you," said Isserman, "if at some time prior to talking to Mr. Hitz you told some representative of the government at great length what you have testified to." The answer was clear: "Not that I know of." The prosecution, when it recalled Kornfeder the next day, had Mr. Kornfeder recall that when he met the *World-Telegram* reporter, Nelson Frank; a leg-man for Woltmann, someone was with him. It was Robert Lanphier, New York FBI agent, who has sat alongside Hitz at the prosecutors' table throughout the trial. And he was told he was an FBI man at the end of the interview, he testified. Said the witness: "The subject of conversation drifted to Mr. Gerhart Eisler. . . . I told them I knew Eisler as Mr. Edwards." He had told them about the Cleveland incidents. And the incident in the park. "I think I did," he said.

When Mr. Isserman read back his testimony of the previous day that he had only told the reporter he knew Eisler, Kornfeder said sulkily: "Mr. Counsel, knowing Mr. Eisler includes all I know about him."

When he read back his testimony that if he ever talked to an FBI man about the Cleveland incidents "I didn't know the individual as FBI. If they were I had no knowledge." Isserman asked: "Would you say that your testimony yesterday was incorrect." "I

**DILLY** **by Sam Pollach**

**"Well, you gotta admit it means more jobs for artists."**



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think so," was the reply, and he climbed down off the witness stand, smiling.

But it would be painting Mr. Kornfeder in too rosy a light to show him only as a witness who made a single major error. Mr. Kornfeder was not simply a man who perjured himself and who concealed his work with the FBI and who lied about his residence and who was employed by Homer Martin. His entire testimony was shot through with the incredible and the contradictory. He said he had his conversation in the park with Eisler in August, 1934. But he told the Dies committee he quit the party in the spring of 1934, Isserman brought out.

"What do you call spring?" Isserman asked. And the judge asked: "The question is, did you so testify?" Said the imperturbable Kornfeder, compressing his lips: "I don't recall."

But Isserman was not through. "Did you tell any of this (the role of the alleged Edwards) to the Dies committee?" he asked. "I probably did," was the answer. He recalled testifying about someone named Ewart, and someone named Brown. Was he confusing someone with Eisler? No, he said uncertainly. In the end Isserman gave him the transcript of the 1939 Dies hearing and a recess was called to allow him to examine it to see if, in his extended afternoon's testimony on "Comintern representatives" and other juicy details, he had once mentioned this man whom he now was picturing as the man whose word was "law" in the US, who had been responsible for expelling him, etc.

The jury was called back in. Reporters sat with pencils poised. Mr. Kornfeder licked his thick lips. "I didn't find the name of Edwards mentioned in that testimony," he said.

DESPITE an entire afternoon's testimony in behalf of the government, Louis Budenz testified to little that was material save that he knew some thirty articles printed in the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker* which were signed by a Hans Berger. Later he was shown some fifty-four articles. He inferred that they were not written by Joseph Starobin, foreign editor of the *Daily Worker*, as the defense contends, but admitted most of them were handled by Starobin, and could claim having handled himself only six of the fifty-four. At no time did he say that Hans Berger was Eisler, or that Eisler was Berger. He did claim that Eisler resembled a man whom he later knew as "Edwards" who appeared at the first meeting of editorial department heads attended by Budenz back in 1935, before he himself was anything more than a reporter in the labor department of the newspaper.

Three of the six Hans Berger articles which he himself handled, Budenz said, were not used, because "they were considered to be too severe in expression" in treating the policy within Germany. Yet the author, he would have the jury believe, was the man who wielded such mysterious power.

Mr. Isserman read to Budenz his testimony before the Un-American Committee in which he said: "I would say definitely that Edwards was Eisler. I am firmly convinced of it and think that further inquiry will show that this is the case. If this were a normal case, I would say that it definitely was so. But we are dealing with a conspiracy, and in this sort of action it is possible for Communists to throw out false statements. Although I think we can prove it from the records and files, I will just say that I believe very strongly this Edwards was Eisler." Isserman asked him if he had consulted the files. No. Mr. Budenz had wanted to, but he had never had time to go through the *Daily Worker* files.

His testimony was replete with such vague phrases as "The only time a formal introduction (to Edwards) would ever have been was in 1935," only to admit later he had never been formally introduced to him.

Budenz, when asked if he hadn't been shown a picture of Eisler by the FBI before he left the *Daily Worker* in October, 1945, surprised even the defense counsel by his glib reply. "No, sir," he said, "I had no contact with the FBI until six months after I left the Communist Party, when they sought me out at Notre Dame." He first was shown pictures of Eisler in the fall of 1946, which was not long before his speech which was the opening gun in the carefully-built Eisler case. But, he said, he had told the FBI about Eisler when he first met with them that spring.

"And you knew for two years before you quit the *Daily Worker* that you were going to quit it, didn't you, Mr. Budenz?" he was asked on cross-examination. He replied: "Well, in a certain way; men do not make up their minds all at once. I had doubts and difficulties."

What these doubts and difficulties were became clear later when Mr. Isserman elicited the information from him that before quitting he was promised a job at Notre Dame. "Yes, sir, I had to find a place to function," said Budenz meekly. His decision to leave the Communist Party, he said, "culminated around August or September, maybe a little earlier. The fact of the matter is that it practically had culminated around the latter part of June."

Other questions put by Isserman and Budenz' replies:

Q. And you continued to accept money for your employment on the *Daily Worker* until October 10, 1945, is that correct? A. Yes, sir, and I performed services. I worked very hard.

Q. And wasn't it your intention to remain on the *Daily Worker* until October so that you could engage in an open act of conversion to the Catholic faith while you were still an editor of the *Daily Worker?* Wasn't that the plan? A. Well, with an explanation.

Q. Now, you will have your opportunity to explain.

MR. HITZ: I think that opportunity should be given now.

THE COURT: Certainly, if he thinks it is necessary to a correct understanding.

MR. ISSERMAN: I have no objection.

THE WITNESS: Yes, it is. The thing was I felt they had no basis for the campaign that was always carried on of accusation and vituperation for anyone who leaves them. I had hopes of being able to leave under good colors, and not the accusation that is always made that no one leaves because of principle, but because he had done something wrong.

MR. ISSERMAN: But you weren't ready to declare that you were leaving on what you called principle until Oct. 10, 1945? A. I left at that time, and I did that for the reason that I give.

Q. And didn't you in your book, which is called *This Is My Story*, say that, "At the *Daily Worker* I criticized copy, made proposals and revision on pieces back to the line—and fingered a rosary in my pocket as I did so. That continued for four weeks." A. That is right, that is correct, too.

Isserman then asked if it were all arranged for him to go to Notre Dame before he left the *Daily Worker*. "Yes, sir, it was," was the reply. "That ends the cross-examination, if the court please," Isserman said with satisfaction.



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# review and comment

## THOMAS MANN AS CRITIC

***The bourgeois romantic sees freedom with the eyes of a class that rejects reality.***

**By S. FINKELSTEIN**

ESSAYS OF THREE DECADES, *by Thomas Mann. Knopf.* $4.

THOMAS MANN'S critical essays throw much light upon Mann the creative writer, revealing as they do his theory of literary production.

The latest of these essays is dated 1939, when Mann was already an exile from Germany. There is little indication in this volume of the subsequent changes that took place in Mann's thinking about human beings and society — changes that may be found both in the *Joseph* novels and in his later political essays. Yet the fact that this volume appears now indicates that Mann is willing to stand by it. And a discussion of these essays may help the student to understand even the later Mann, for he is still controlled by a middle-class view of the world. He still shows lingering tendencies to blame fascism on the "mob-spirit," rather than on the bankers and industrialists, German and non-German, who created Hitler and the Nazi party.

He still praises democracy as a rule by a humanitarian "elite," a kind of benevolent despotism.

Mann is a complex figure, just as the German people present a complex problem. He has always changed, unlike some contemporary romantic writers who found an attitude and shored themselves up within its walls. He has, however, always followed changes rather than helped to bring them about. He is a great sounding board. And so just as his essays on German culture written during World War I, happily not included here, echoed the nationalistic confusion with which the German intelligentsia and social democrats tried to justify the imperialist war, so his present confusion, especially in regard to the Soviet Union, mirrors the present-day conflict that exists among the German people.

Mann, like most romantic writers, attacks the bourgeoisie. Such an attack may be found as early as 1922, in the essay on Kleist, where he talks of the "decades of bourgeois stultification." But who represents to Mann the "dawn of the new epoch"? It is none other than Nietzsche! The bourgeois intellectuals always renounce the bourgeoisie. But in doing so, they renounce the entire world of reality, for the bourgeois world is to them the only real world. And so, in their seemingly lofty renunciations of the bourgeois in the name of art, we may find repeated every bourgeois social prejudice, advanced as a fundamental and universal truth. Typical is their attitude toward the working class, which, when it is not ignored, is represented as the underworld of society. Also typical is their approach to the national question, which is always in terms of bourgeois nationalism. Mann, for example, writes proudly of every fine piece of thought and art which he analyzes as something typically German, as if no other country could be quite as brilliant and profound. The next moment nationalism is denounced in favor of an abstract universality, which expresses the fatuous hope that the rest of the world will accept German culture as the best of all possible thought. So Mann in one passage calls Wagner the most "German" of artists, and in another the most "universal." And he gives the show away when he says that Wagner is more "national" than "*of the people.*" Such perversion of the national question, found in Mann and most of the German intellectuals, is a reflection of what happened in history, when Germany was unified as a state under the domination of the Junkers and imperialist bankers. The nationalist theory and program that followed, "national" but not "of the people," brought about the actual devastation of the German people and nation.

THE inability to understand the true nature of the national question is part of a deeper contradiction within this bourgeois romanticist thinking, which is to be found in its concept of freedom. To the Marxist and realist, freedom is "the recognition of necessity," the understanding of the possibilities of action opened up by the conflicts of the real world. The romanticist, who denies necessity, attains not freedom but a mind in chains. Typical is this statement in the essay on Goethe:

"I am still resolved not to pass judgment. I did, indeed, throw out the question of nobility, the matter of rank. But I am wary of hasty decisions, and even at the risk of being called vacillating, I hold to my policy of the free hand and my faith in its ultimate fruitfulness. Why should I not be a cautious judge of the swaying battle, when I know that what I called above the arrogance of spirit is one with the great and highly affecting principle which we call freedom?"

The best example of the imprisoned mind, the helplessness in the face of the demands of the real world, which comes out of such an approach to "freedom," is given by Mann's novel *The Magic Mountain.* Here, after a discussion of democracy and anti-democracy, of medicine and superstition, of mind and body, in which no sides are



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taken and doubt is thrown upon everything, Mann's hero finds himself singing "Der Lindenbaum" with the Kaiser's armies invading France, not knowing what the war is all about but hoping that he will kill Frenchmen in the name of "love."

*Essays of Three Decades* shows Mann as a critic, full of warm appreciations and fine insights but unable to solve any critical problem. Dealing with Goethe, for example, he is faced with the contradiction of a man who was both a free, soaring, critical mind and a narrow philistine, the great national poet of Germany and the opponent of democratic national struggle, the brilliant progenitor of ideas and the conservative politician. Mann "solves" the problem in a way typical of his entire artistry, in a play of phrases, a use of a noble word to describe an ignoble deed. The word he finds for "defeat" is "renunciation."

"Goethe's pathos of renunciation—or, since we are speaking of permanent forces dominating the whole of existence, his ethos of renunciation—is of a more personal kind. It is his destiny, it is the instinctive mandate of his especially national gift, which was essentially civilizing in its mission. Or, rather, might this destiny and mission, this bond, this conditioning limitation and pedagogic duty of renunciation, be after all something less personal to him than it just now appeared? Might it perhaps be the law of his destiny, innate and inviolable save at the expense of heavy spiritual penalties; the imperative which is the essence of the German spirit, destined always, as it is, somehow and in some degree, to feel itself called to a cultural task?"

One turns with pleasure to Engels, who finds the solution in the real and miserable conditions of German life in Goethe's time.

"Thus Goethe is now colossal, now petty; now a defiant, ironical, world-scorning genius, now a calculating, complacent, narrow philistine. Even Goethe was unable to overcome the wretchedness of German life; on the contrary, it overcame him, and this victory over the greatest German is the best proof that it cannot be overcome by the individual. Goethe was too universal, too active a nature, too fleshly, to seek escape from this wretchedness in a flight, like Schiller's to the Kantian ideal. . . . His temperament, his energies, his whole spiritual tendency was directed toward practical life, and the practical life that he met with was miserable."

THE comparison between Engels' clarity and Mann's cloudiness throws light not only on Mann's approach but on his style. Mann is easy to read if we allow ourselves to fall under the spell of his images and word-music. He is frightfully difficult if we try to make realistic sense out of what he says. Never relating his ideas and generalizations back to the world of reality, every word becomes ambiguous and slippery. The romantic mind, denying the "swaying battle" or the world of reality, finds itself also denying reason. Calling the resulting irrationality "freedom," in the name of this freedom it is chained to conscious and subconscious prejudices. And it adopts a similar attitude to its readers. Never does it reason with the reader on a common basis of fact. Instead it uses a pretense of reason, a kind of abstract dialectic of raising contradictions, to sow confusion, and then employs all the devices of rhetoric, of emotional persuasion, to implant its own prejudices in the reader. An outstanding example is the discussion of Tolstoy, in the essay "Goethe and Tolstoy."

It reads like a warm-hearted appreciation. Mann is a wonderful talker. He takes the reader on a kind of guided tour of an artist or a work of art, bubbling with delight over its many sideshows. His technique in these essays is like that of his novels, where he can set people talking for pages on end, on any subject, with any point of view, always full of wit and fine turns of phrase, always in character. But here, throughout his praise of Tolstoy, there are always little reservations. Tolstoy has a hint of megalomania; he is a little of a hypocrite, wearing peasant blouses made out of the finest cambric; he is a little of a barbarian; he is essentially "Asiatic"; he is dogmatic, sensual, uncivilized, nihilistic, in love with the body rather than the spirit, seeking for the "beast-god." And the point of all these subtle hints, all of them dropped into paragraphs of the most delighted praise, is to lead up to the climax of the essay, which has nothing to do with Tolstoy but is a thundering denunciation of the Bolshevik Revolution and the shooting of the Czar! Such is the final hypocrisy of the romantic, who announces that he abhors the very idea of linking art with politics. But he is all too willing to



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make political orations, such as that which ends this essay, when he feels that the class to which he is linked is attacked. And he never mentions that he is defending a class—it is only the highest "humane" and "democratic" ideals. I do not want to take issue here with the shoddy politics ("In him [Czar Nicholas] Peter the Great was murdered, and his fall opened to his people not the path toward Europe, but the way home to Asia"). Mann has since modified his hostility to the Soviet Union. What I want to take issue with here is his shoddy approach to culture, which will talk politics under a pretense of literary criticism, distort the significance of an artist to make a political point, use the glittering rhetoric of analogies as a substitute for reason and fact.

Throughout this book, which is offered as a book of literary appreciations, we can trace the fluctuations of Mann's political consciousness, although the politics always is injected so deviously that we can hardly use the term "consciousness." In the essay above, for instance, written in 1922, Mann conceives of Goethe as a noble and patrician. "In Goethe's mind, the consciousness of his social position lay very close to that of his nobility as a human being, as a child of God. The two flow together in one and the same consciousness of nobility, or 'inborn merit.'" This itself is an example of Mann's slick irrationality. Beaming on the titled nobility, he hedges with the phrase "inborn merit." Ten years later, however, in "Goethe as a Representative of the Bourgeois Age," he transforms Goethe into a utopian, bourgeois socialist, and asks that the bourgeoisie take up its "historic" next step of socialism. "The times challenge the middle class to remind itself of its native potentialities." This is a step forward for Mann. But nowhere does he hint that the working class might even be interested in such a project. The reason is, of course, that the "Western World," to Mann, is the bourgeois world. Evidently the working class must be an infiltration from "Asia."

Such thinking renders most of Mann's literary criticism suspect. He is in these essays, as in his novels, a very fine artist. He is an artist because he has the artist's magic of transcribing at least a section of man's emotional experience and reaction to the world faithfully and convincingly. So in these essays he exhibits his fine sensitivity to the varied flow of emotion and image in a work of art, his ability to recreate a complex mind and personality with at least some faithfulness to the historical figures he is describing. But Mann always transforms his subject into the image of himself. He is never sure about the real world, never sure about his own thinking. The real world is always offering him rude shocks and surprises. He comes nearest satisfaction when, as with Goethe, Wagner, Kleist, his own prejudices and limitations come near matching those of his subjects. Even there, as I have shown in comparing his appraisal of the Goethe problem with that of Engels, he can never give his portrait the final touch of completion which can come only from the ability to stand outside the subject after entering into the fullest sympathy with it. He is at his worst with men like Tolstoy and Cervantes, who rub him the wrong way. Being himself a prey to bewilderment and an opponent of fact, he cannot learn from men who bring to his consciousness a fresh world of human experience.

There is much a Marxist can retain from the romantic tradition. The romantic spirit is essentially the assertion of the might of the individual. It appeared in world thought as a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, fighting the feudal nobility, denouncing rule by birth, title and landed wealth, opening up the exploration of the real world. It was a giant stride in the emancipation of the human being from slavery to man and to nature. With the rise of monopoly capitalism, this romantic individualism lost its grip upon the real world. Aghast at the cynicism of capitalist exploitation, it arrived at the theory that the individual and society must always be hostile to one another. This was of course only a mental trap, the cut-throat methods of bourgeois money-making transformed into a universal "law" of human relations. The next step was to cast doubt upon science, reason and all reality. Finally the very exaltation of the individual prepared for his diminution; what was left was only a throbbing sense of isolated existence, of a mind driven by powerful impulses variously termed "love" or "will," and terrified by the thought of extinction.

The romantic of today is like a sick man who attacks those who would cure him, for the romantics, after a first period of fury against bourgeois philistinism and the market, almost al-

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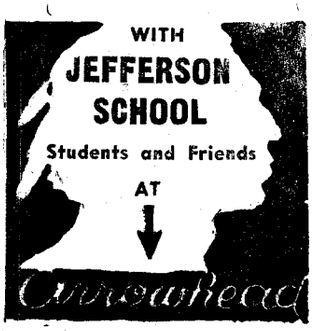


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ways go on to level their guns against the organized working class and socialism. They carry on this argument with such abstract terms as "mechanization" or "regimentation." Yet the working class, in breaking the grip of those who would exploit it, also abolishes all exploitation of man by man. I know of no bolder flight of the mind, no thought more in the great groundbreaking tradition of romanticism, than Marx's assertion that with the end of bourgeois exploitation and the abolition of classes, man's "prehistory comes to an end."

In my discussion of Yvor Winters I tried to show the importance of craftsmanship in art. Craftsmanship is not to be relegated to a category of dry-as-dust technique. It is something far greater, an extension of man's labor, of his ability to manipulate the materials the world gives him, of his capacity to develop by working with his mind and hands.

Similarly Mann's approach to art as dealing with human beings, and his approach to the human being as a complex bundle of emotions, has a basic truth. It loses value only in that he limits his search for individual freedom within the world view of a class that has turned its back upon the demands of reality and is trying to hold back the stream of human progress. The battle for the liberation of the human being is now being fought by the working class, and only by understanding the role of the working class today, only by conscious alliance with the working class—only, in short, by discovering the world of reality—can romanticism itself again find a valid basis in human thought. In such a process, of course, romanticism itself will become completely transformed from its late nineteenth century and present-day manifestations.

## Insulted Lives

HORIZON IS CALLING, *by Taro Yashima. Holt.* $3.50.

"HORIZON IS CALLING" is an autobiography in pictures, a continuation of Yashima's earlier book, *New Suns.* The artist-author takes us from the time he and his pregnant wife are released from a Japanese prison camp in the winter of '35 to the poignant closing pages where the unhappy artist paints the tantalizing horizon of the Pacific and dreams of escape to America, "the land of museums."

This is not a dramatic narrative. The story moves by halts and starts with the vertical motion of the walls of a gallery. But Yashima is a most persuasive artist and I followed him willingly from gallery to gallery. First come the happy days of freedom and fatherhood that swell with joyous drawings: "Mako, our Son . . ." and "Self-Portrait with Smile." After the idyll of fatherhood we journey, artist, painting-kit, wife and child, into the Japanese interior, among the people ". . . whose lives were insulted lives" and we visit Yashima's childhood friend, Kiyoshi. Yashima draws him with an affectionate touch: a peasant who rebels at the tax-ridden lives of his people and dreams of improving himself.

We return to the cities corrupted by the generals; the time is 1936. The jingoists are clamoring for war and Tokyo is under martial law. Manchuria is a forbidden word; never a night passes without the silent, secret movement of troops.

Another gallery, savage and sinister, descended from the Dantesque satire of Goya. Here Yashima's subtle brush bristles and swoops to the evil geniuses of terror. As the militarists snap the lanyards of war and the trusts swallow up the small entrepreneurs, Yashima's father-in-law among them, the Tokka-Ka, the secret police, carry on their inquisition.

And now, the work of the betrayers done, the time has arrived for the urns that bear the ashes of the dead back to a grieving people. Yashima's drawings are solemn, somber, grief-stricken. And when he can weep no more he rushes from the maelstrom of death into the private solace of painting. He does portraits of friends who have gone to war. Sketches the "beautiful body" of Mako. Studies the work of the old and beloved masters. And ends by squinting across the shimmering Pacific and longing to be in the distant land of museums.

This is no ordinary story and these are no ordinary drawings. The text is sketchy but penetrating and the pictures are the work of a modern master. Yashima has taken the styles of Van Gogh and Cezanne, who in turn were influenced by the Japanese masters, and applied them to his time and the anguish of his people.

Hokusai and Hiroshige, were they alive today, would be proud of Taro Yashima.

PHIL BARD.



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# sights and sounds

## "CROSSFIRE"

***The realistic base is retained in this fine film in which truth makes melodrama an art.***

**By WILLIAM SIMON**

"CROSSFIRE" (at the Rivoli Theater) is a distinguished melodrama. What passes for our popular art is full of melodramas. Four out of every five paper novels on the newsstands are thrillers, and you can't pass a movie house without seeing a still of a snarling face, a hand clutching a throat. Why is there so abundant a representation of violence? Our own civilization has plenty of violence. People are killed for being Jews —it happened to six million in Europe. They are being killed for being Negroes, in the South—and even, as Sinclair Lewis points out, in the North. They were killed a couple of years ago for wanting freedom from fascism. With the ruins not cleared away from the last war, some are planning, and even crying out, like Bullitt, to start another. What better organized murder plot is there than fascism? What better detective story is there than the search of peace-loving and decent people for some final causes of war, for the fine hand behind the hate-breeding?

The violence, the murder and murder plan, becomes translated into book and movie with its realistic base removed, and so its relation to our normal lives becomes that of a nightmare. The greatness of *Crossfire* is that it is different, a melodrama that makes sense. A man is killed who is a Jew, and killed because he is a Jew. The killer is an anti-Semite whose anti-Semitism is only one aspect of his scared mind and defeated life. He seeks to gain a hopped-up confidence in himself through hatred. The detective finds the first clue to the murderer through the murderer's anti-Semitism. And he is sensitive to this clue because his own grandfather was killed in an anti-Irish riot. As Robert Young says, in the role of detective Finley, all this is history.

The result is that here is a movie absorbing while you see it, and even more exciting to think about afterward. When you leave the theater you don't feel that you have waked up from a dream. The picture stays with you. You walk out in the street and scan the faces of the people walking there, trying to size them up, wondering whether one may be another Montgomery, the murderer, a second another Keeley, the sergeant who at first tries to protect his "buddy" against the cops, and then helps them find the killer.

The movie is handled with the artistry that hides art. A second viewing might disclose in more detail the thought and imagination behind every move, but the proof of artistry is in the fact that the audience is held on edge throughout, in spite of the fact that the killer is known almost from the beginning. And yet, in removing this element of mystery, the writer and director do not make the mistake of throwing the emphasis on the hunted, transforming him into an underdog. They show him for the dangerous force he is, savaging killing a witness to escape detection, cunningly trying to throw the blame on still another soldier while pretending to help him. At the same time they do not make him worse than he is, an originator of anti-Semitism and hate theories. While they do not reveal the fine and cultivated hand that encourages and finances fascism and its many forms of propaganda, they show Montgomery, the killer, for the sucker he is. As Finley says, he died long before the events leading up to his physical death.

The fundamental reason for the artistic rightness of this film is that whenever an artistic problem turns up it is solved by going back to reality, and seeing how life handles this problem. An example is the powerful speech Finley makes near the end against all such hate theories—which are as dangerous, he says, as "a loaded gun," and can be turned eventually against any people, any religious group that can be classified as some kind of minority. Superimposed simply as a speech, it might have sounded unnatural. As handled in the film, however, it is one of the dramatic high spots, for it takes place as part of the struggle for the conscience of another soldier, Leroy, who is the key man in catching the murderer. And the film acutely shows that Leroy too suffers from some prejudices, which he must fight against. It probes deeper, showing that he too is frightened by Montgomery. It reveals his exultation when he finally realizes that he is terrorized, and has the weapon with which to fight back.

The actors, Robert Ryan, Robert Young, Robert Mitchum, George Cooper, are all splendid. They do well not because they have suddenly become geniuses but because the characters they have to portray are people they know well, and the lines they speak are lines that they have heard countless times in life. Director Ed-



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ward Dmytryk, screen writer John Paxton, Dore Schary, Adrian Scott and RKO deserve congratulations. *Crossfire* will have to be supported and fought for, because it will make enemies. But if supported it can be a great step forward for the film industry. For it is a dangerous film, dangerous to the stream of nonsense that is the main output of Hollywood. People who see *Crossfire* are not as likely to remain satisfied with cops and robbers fantasies on the familiar model.

## "The Hucksters"

"SOME day," says Clark Gable about two-thirds of the way through *The Hucksters* (Capitol), "fifty million people are going to reach out and turn off their radios all at once. And that will be the end of you and me and Evan Llewellyn Evans!" Somehow Mr. Gable as Victor Norman, advertising genius, seems hardly the person to utter this criticism, since his contribution to radio shown here seems to be a particularly loathsome commercial, a dimply, twinkle-eyed grin, and a singular persuasiveness with women and ad agency chiefs.

Badly written as was the novel by Frederic Wakeman which inspired MGM's costly abortion, the film version manages to crowd it to the rail in banality, bad taste and schoolboy naivete. The book had tried, at least, to point a finger, however feebly, at anti-Semitism. It depicted Norman separating the Jewish talent agent, Dave Lash, from a momentarily valuable comedian by threatening to use racial innuendo in informing everyone about a rather shabby deal. In the film, Lash has become "a guy from the wrong side of the tracks," seeking to hide his reform-school past.

Advertising is founded on a Big Lie: that consumer goods cost less because brand names and competitive advertising bring them wider distribution. Yet all the jaded Mr. Norman could find to censure in this corrupt industry were the egomaniacal antics of the blustering soap tycoon. "It is entirely wrong," he blurts out in a passionate denouement, emptying a water carafe over Evan Llewellyn Evans' head, "that a man like you should control so much of what goes on the air." Yet the wrong lies not alone with Evans; it rests with all ad agency philistines who appoint themselves arbiters of public taste, with the whole buccaneering philosophy of big business.


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# THEATER

THE idea of a summer theater for New York is a good one and its location in the City Center is a proper one. The assembled cast contains a number of brilliant actors and makes up an exceptional acting company. The directing and designing shown in the initiating production are worthy of high praise. All that is missing is a play to make use of these advantages.

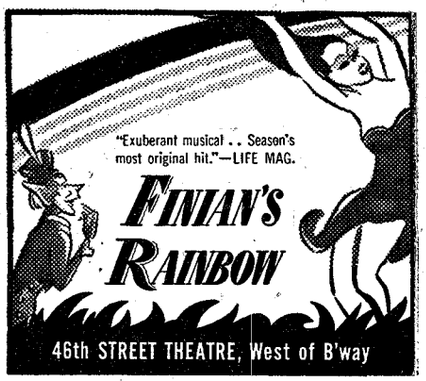
For *Rip Van Winkle*, which may have been chosen on the theory that a summer play should lie light on the mind, merely proves that emptiness is tedious. Our drama historians tell us that the play was a perennial success in past generations and the favorite vehicle of the great actor Joseph Jefferson. However, the social scene that appears to have given the play relevance to a past generation has vanished as completely as the village to which Rip returned after his twenty-year nap.

The distance is measurable by comparing the troll deliriums of the amiable boozer Rip, and their thunder-rolling mountain setting, with the Rabbit hallucination (a significant modern symbol for the gentle spirit in the present stage of capitalist society) of the amiable boozer Elmer Dowd in *Harvey*, and its setting in a psychiatric institution. It would require deeper insights than the dramatized *Rip Van Winkle* ever pretended to, to carry it across such a gap.

By textual analysis *Harvey* may not prove to be the better play at all. But since the allusions and associations are all contemporary they ring vastly more bells and give a sense of immediacy and reality that *Rip Van Winkle*, despite such fine performances as Philip Borneuf's in the title role and Grace Coppin's as his shrewish wife, cannot approach. It is a case of silver platters for stale dishes.

*Rip Van Winkle*, like *Craig's Wife* earlier in the season, proved that a revival, if it is not of classic power, cannot compete with a contemporary play. Fortunately the following Summer Theater production will be a classic, a play by Shaw, and our next report should be more encouraging.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.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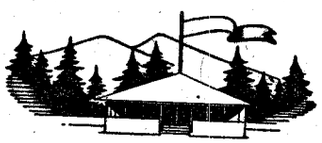
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